

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9422
Fr2F94

WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
U.S. Food Distribution Administration
Washington 25, D.C.

July 31, 1943

To: Personnel of Fruit and Vegetable Branch in Washington,
D. C., and Field Offices

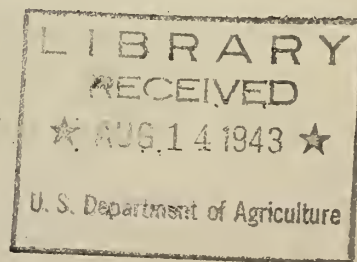
From: C. F. Kunkel, Acting Chief, Fruit and Vegetable Branch

Subject: Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committees --
A National and Local

Early in 1942 it became clear to officials of the War Production Board, as well as to many members of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry throughout the country, that it would be extremely difficult to obtain cooperation of the industry in the war effort without continuous consultation between recognized leaders, engaged in production and distribution, and officials of federal agencies charged with the responsibility of assuring adequate supplies of fruits and vegetables for military and civilian needs.

In July 1942, the War Production Board established a special Fruit and Vegetable Section, under direction of Mr. N. L. Allen, to handle problems relating to production and distribution of fruits and vegetables, as well as priorities and import applications. Mr. Allen was charged with the responsibility of bringing about the prompt appointment of national fruit and vegetable industry advisory committees to work with the participating agencies. This was done in close cooperation with Dr. M. P. Rasmussen, of the Office of Civilian Supply, W.P.B., and Mr. W. G. Meal, of this Branch.

The industry did not lend itself readily to the formation of a single committee because of the large number of commodities handled and the broad geographical nature of production and distribution within the industry. Because a large number of different kinds of both fruits and vegetables are packed in many districts and are handled by practically all packers, shippers, wholesalers, jobbers, brokers, and retailers, it did not seem practicable to develop a special committee for fruits and another one for vegetables. It was finally decided, after much consultation with the trade, to set up two closely cooperating committees, one to cover "shipping" and the other to cover "marketing". The aim of these committees was to represent all geographic, commodity, and functional groups throughout the industry. All appointments were made after conferences with the principal trade and farm organizations, which not only endorsed the program, but gave it their enthusiastic support.



The membership of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee on Shipping at present is as follows:

- (1) Reuben G. Benz, Reuben G. Benz Co., Yakima, Wash.
- (2) Paul Stark, Stark Bros. Nurseries & Orchards Co.,
Louisiana, Missouri
- (3) James G. McCarrick, James G. McCarrick Co., Robstown, Texas
- (4) Luther L. Chandler, Goulds Growers, Inc., Goulds, Fla.
- (5) Harold J. Simonson, Glen Head, Long Island, New York
- (6) Sam H. Cohodas, Cohodas Bros. Co., Ishpeming, Mich.
- (7) Paul S. Armstrong, California Fruit Growers Exch., Inc.,
Los Angeles, Calif.
- (8) Farrell Hansen, Idaho Falls Potato Growers, Inc.,
Idaho Falls, Idaho
- (9) William B. Grainger, W. B. Grainger Packing Co.,
Salinas, Calif.
- (10) R. D. Keene, R. D. Keene, Inc., Winter Garden, Florida

The membership of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry Committee on Marketing at present is as follows:

- (1) Ed. Blalock, Ben Keith & Co., Fort Worth, Texas
- (2) H. M. Buzek, Flatow-Riley Co., Cincinnati, Ohio
- (3) Chas. W. Irrgang, Fruit Auction Sales Co., Chicago, Ill.
- (4) Harvey A. Baum, Atlantic Commission Co., New York, N. Y.
- (5) D. E. Robinson, McCann Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.
- (6) L. V. Eberhard, Eberhard's Markets, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- (7) H. D. Williamson, American Stores Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
- (8) Harry Froeber, Froeber Produce Co., Winston-Salem, N. C.
- (9) Van C. Taggart, Frye Distributing Co., Chicago, Ill.
- (10) Tom B. Pearce, Pearce-Young-Angel Co., Columbia, S. C.
- (11) W. L. Harrison, Safeway Stores, Inc., Oakland, Calif.
- (12) Chas. W. Havener, C. W. Havener & Co., New York, N. Y.

These committees met on several occasions under the auspices of the War Production Board and supplied much information and advice concerning transportation, warehousing, price control, containers, priorities, and related activities. They also served as a medium for keeping the trade informed concerning activities of various governmental agencies under the War Powers Act. The Fruit and Vegetable Section of the War Production Board and these National Industry Advisory Committees were transferred to the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture as a result of the Presidential Directive establishing a Food Administrator. Mr. W. G. Meal was appointed Government Chairman of these two committees, because of the Department policy requiring that a government employee be chairman of industry committees. In order to retain the benefit of a close liaison arrangement with the trade, Mr. Nathan L. Allen has continued to serve as Industry Consultant to the Food Distribution Administration in connection with these committees.

At the first meetings of these committees under the auspices of the Food Distribution Administration, its members conferred with branches of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and other government agencies on such important national problems as permanent price ceilings on fresh

fruits and vegetables, the manpower situation, containers, transportation, procurement purchasing procedure, establishment of local industry advisory committees, and similar matters. In order that a government chairman, fully conversant with the industry and its membership, may be available at all times, Dr. M. P. Rasmussen, Consultant, Fruit and Vegetable Branch, will be made co-chairman of these committees with Mr. W. G. Meal.

It should be emphasized that these National Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committees have occupied an unusual position. The industry at large has full confidence in their membership and, consequently, these committees have a keen sense of responsibility. Their counsel has frequently been requested by government agencies and their recommendations have been given most careful consideration because they have been regarded as a permanent group from which government agencies could obtain the benefits of practical experience.

It is recognized that the two national committees, as presently constituted, are large. In order to cope more satisfactorily with urgent problems, however, it is likely that individuals representing such interests as California deciduous fruit, Maine potatoes, Arizona and Southern California vegetables, Middle Atlantic States vegetables, and others, may be added in the near future.

Local Industry Committees

After several meetings of the National Industry Advisory Committees had been held, it became apparent that many problems were largely of a local character and that advice was needed concerning the local application of wartime regulations. The national committees felt it necessary that their activities be limited to national problems and, therefore, recommended that the establishment of local and area committees be considered. In addition to the National Industry Advisory Committees, other members of the trade and of farm organizations likewise indicated the need for local and area advisory committees, and recommended that these be established where local groups requested such action.

The organization of local industry advisory committees has, accordingly, been undertaken to date in 17 markets and one shipping area, in order to obtain the advice which could only be given by those who have actually handled fruits and vegetables. It is anticipated that committees will be set up as rapidly as possible in other markets or areas. Local committees have been and will continue to be set up only where the need therefor seems clear and where the local industry has requested it.

Procedure for Establishing Committees

The appointment of local advisory committees is carried out in accordance with suggestions made by representatives of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry, as follows:

AUG 14 1943

- (1) An open meeting, sponsored by the industry, is held to discuss the need for such a committee and decide whether or not one is desired by the industry.
- (2) In the case of shipping area committees, each type of grower and each type of handler is at liberty to nominate several individuals to represent his particular group. Growers have equal representation with handlers.
- (3) In the case of market committees, to insure fair and adequate representation, each type of distributor (growers, brokers, wholesalers, jobbers, retailers, and any other type) is likewise privileged to nominate several individuals from his particular group.
- (4) Members of the National Industry Advisory Shipping Committee are ex-officio members of any local shipping area committees in their respective localities. Similarly, members of the national committee on distribution are ex-officio members of any local receiving market committee.

Duties and Responsibilities of Committees

Members of these committees have been appointed by the Food Distribution Administration to act solely in an advisory capacity. They are encouraged to make suggestions or comments of any nature which may assist in maintaining efficient distribution of fruits and vegetables. It should be understood, however, that the industry is not authorized to take any action on any proposal unless orders have been issued by some appropriate government agency. It is expected that each committee will function in such a manner as will help the industry make its maximum contribution to the war effort.

Government Representation on Local Committees

A government representative will serve as chairman of each local committee. All committees set up thus far have field men of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch serving as local chairmen. These government chairmen are under instructions to preside at and to conduct all meetings of local committees so as to comply with federal anti-trust laws. Assurances have been given by the Solicitor, U. S. Department of Agriculture, that where this is done, members of the industry may assist government representatives in developing programs by giving information and advice without violating the federal anti-trust laws. The chairman is instructed to convey to the committee such inquiries or information as may be received from this Branch and from other government agencies.

Origination of Committee Business

Business which may properly come before a local committee may be originated;

- (1) By government agencies which may submit proposals or questions to the committee through the chairman.
- (2) By members of the committee who desire discussion of a proposal raised by the committeeman himself, or by other members of the trade, or by some governmental agency.

The membership of these committees consists of men in daily contact with the fruit and vegetable business and who are, as a group, in possession of much essential information. Every suggestion, made by a local committee, should, therefore, be accompanied by a complete statement of the facts in the case.

Objectives of Local Advisory Committees

The national trade and farm organizations*, which also recommended the establishment of local advisory committees, indicated the hope that such committees might assist in attaining the following objectives:

- (1) "Encourage maximum production."
- (2) "Prevent runaway prices."
- (3) "Help provide an adequate supply of containers, labor, and transportation."
- (4) "Prevent profiteering, conspiracies and monopolies."
- (5) "Enforce fair trade practices."
- (6) "Maintain efficient and effective distribution."
- (7) "Preserve normal legitimate and essential industry operations."
- (8) "Allow maximum free competition and operation of the law of supply and demand."
- (9) "Encourage and protect individual initiative and small business."
- (10) "Provide prompt and flexible allocation of supplies to consumer markets and for military needs."
- (11) "Minimize speculation, maldistribution and waste."
- (12) "Help develop simple and well defined rules and regulations that are understandable and easily applied to normal methods of doing business as well as to operation with the minimum of government personnel."

* "Recommendations of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry as presented in conference with representatives of Office of Price Administration and War Food Administration, Washington, D. C., April 19-20, 1943." The organizations represented were (1) American Farm Bureau Federation; (2) National Grange; (3) National Council of Farmer Co-operatives; (4) United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association; (5) National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Distributors; (6) International Apple Association; (7) California Fruit Growers Exchange; (8) American National Co-operative Exchange, Inc.; and (9) Rio Grande Valley Citrus Exchange.

Cooperation with Regional Offices

Because of the large number of highly perishable fruits and vegetables which are produced in many widely scattered areas and because of the highly seasonal nature of operations, any control of distribution is difficult and complicated. Lack of accurate estimates of current and future supplies constitutes an additional obstacle.

The local industry advisory committees have been established on an experimental basis by representatives of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch in Washington. The nature of the industry seemed to require that the development of this project be under the direction of a person who had wide personal acquaintance among the members of the trade and who enjoyed their confidence. Because of this requirement, this project was set up under the direction of Dr. M. P. Rasmussen, reporting directly to Mr. W. G. Meal, and working in close cooperation with Mr. Nathan L. Allen and the various trade and farm organizations.

The Fruit and Vegetable Branch expects to work closely with the regional offices and to keep them informed regarding the work of the committees. Government chairmen have been instructed to notify regional offices of all meetings of local committees. Administrators of regional offices are urged to see that such of their personnel, as are assigned to the fruit and vegetable field, attend committee meetings as often as possible. Each regional office may find it advantageous to consult the local committees concerning its fruit and vegetable problems.

Servicing of Industry Advisory Committees

In order that the activities of the National and Local Industry Advisory Committees may be more completely coordinated with those of the Food Distribution Administration, an Industry Relations Section is being established in the Fruit and Vegetable Branch. This section will report directly to me during the absence of Mr. W. G. Meal. Dr. M. P. Rasmussen will assist in supervising the work and will also act as co-chairman of the National Industry Advisory Committees. Mr. Ford A. Quitslund will act as Secretary of the National Industry Advisory Committees and Assistant Chief of the Industry Relations Section. Mr. V. H. Nicholson and Mr. Ober G. Strauss, both of whom have taken an active part in establishing local industry committees, are being assigned to the Industry Relations Section.

The Industry Relations Section is responsible for obtaining information promptly from the personnel of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch relative to questions raised by these committees. This Section will also be expected to formulate questions on problems, on which the Food Distribution Administration desires advice from these committees, such as the best way to handle the surplus white potato or sweet potato problem, or how to allocate a short crop of onions, without unduly disrupting normal trade channels.

The Industry Relations Section must be kept fully advised concerning the activities of the Branch as a whole, if it is to function effectively. The personnel of the Branch will, therefore, be expected to assist the Industry Relations Section (1) by furnishing promptly all possible information and suggestions; and (2) by referring to committees, through the Industry Relations Section, problems which arise within the Branch and which will affect the industry. On the other hand, the personnel of the Branch will be kept currently informed by the Industry Relations Section concerning advisory committee recommendations, so that the benefits of industry advice and experience may be reflected in the work of the Branch.

Committees to be Consulted on Orders
Affecting Fruit and Vegetable Industry

One of the duties of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch requires participation in the preparation, administration, and approval of orders affecting the fruit and vegetable business. Use has been made of the advice of advisory committees in this work and it seems likely that greater use will be made as policies are worked out more fully. The Food Distribution Administration wants the advice of local as well as of national committees. It wishes to have these committees send recommendations to Washington and will make every effort to bring about prompt and appropriate action. Insofar as it is feasible to do so, it shall be the policy of the Food Distribution Administration to consult with the appropriate industry advisory committees before any orders affecting the fruit and vegetable industry are issued, approved, or amended.

Use by Other Government Agencies

It is recognized, of course, that other government agencies are also concerned with the fruit and vegetable industry in various ways. Deputy Director Kitchen will assume the responsibility of notifying such other agencies and branches regarding these officially appointed industry advisory committees, with the suggestion that they make use of these industry advisory committees in attempting to solve fruit and vegetable problems.

Approved: July 31, 1943

C. W. Kitchen

C. W. Kitchen
Deputy Director
Food Distribution Administration

C. W. Kitchen

